

REMARKS


Reconsideration of the instant application is respectfully requested. The present amendment is responsive to the Office Action of March 28, 2005, in which claims 1-20 are presently pending. Of those, claims 1-5 have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. With regard to the remaining claims under consideration, claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,492,197 to Rinne. Claims 6, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,937,320 to Andricacos, et al. In addition, claims 7 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Andricacos, in view of U.S. Patent 6,613,663 to Furuya. Finally, claims 9, 12, 13, 16, 18 and 19 are indicated to contain allowable subject matter. For the following reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance.

Dependent claims 9, 12 and 18, indicated to be allowable, have been rewritten in independent form. In addition, claims 6, 8 and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice; however the Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter thereof in a continuation application. The dependencies of claims 7, 10, 14 and 20 have each been amended as outlined above to maintain a proper antecedent basis. As such, the outstanding §102 and §103 objections have been rendered moot. Finally, claims 1-5 (previously withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention) have been cancelled without prejudice.

Therefore, the Applicants respectfully submit that the present amendment places the application in condition for allowance. No new matter has been entered and no additional fees are believed to be required. However, if any fees are due with respect to this Amendment, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130 maintained by Applicants' attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,
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